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ABSTRACT

A project in Europe is working to improve the quality of work, promote equal opportunities, combat exclusion and poverty; promote lasting economic growth and a European Union economic policy; and promote sustainable development and quality of life. In order to achieve these goals, three main objectives for vocational education and training (VET) have been defined: (1) increasing the quality and effectiveness of education and training systems; (2) facilitating the access of all to the education and training systems; and (3) opening up education and training systems to the wider world. The Scenarios and Strategies for Vocational Training and Lifelong Learning in Europe Project identified trends in the VET system, including the importance of partnerships and economic restructuring in order to improve competitiveness and to promote changes in the workplace and increasing flexibility of labor. Suggested strategies included improving incentives for all parties to participate in training, requiring worker training and employment contracts, and improving the transparency of qualification structures and mobility. The project results show that four approaches are particularly prominent: (1) strengthening the social dimension of VET and lifelong learning; (2) developing institutions responsible for VET and lifelong learning; (3) developing a transparent structure of educational and VET qualifications and certification; and (4) modernization of work. Four matrices have been constructed to deal with possible scenarios arising from these recommendations. (KC)

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ED 459 326

CEDEFOP/ Thessaloniki, May 2001

The joint Cedefop/ETF project on 'Scenarios and strategies for vocational training and lifelong learning in Europe' A contribution to the debate on the future of Europe

This is a Cedefop working paper prepared by Burkart Sellin[1]. It wants to verify whether and in how far the projects' outcomes may be useful to accompany a wider policy debate on VET and LLL prospects in Europe in the light of foreseeable trends and challenges till the year 2010. The scenario project's impact at the interface between research and policy/ practice ought be promoted by this endeavour. Any suggestion and comment on this line is more than welcome.

1. The political context

In December 2000, the heads of state and government approved a declaration on the future of the European Union which calls for, among other things, a fundamental and wide-ranging debate on the future of Europe. With reference to this declaration, in its Communication of 25 April 2001 the Commission proposed a number of procedures for the debate on the future of the European Union. An open exchange of views on the subject was to accompany the current debate on reform of the institutions and the EU's competences, and would assist preparations for the further Intergovernmental Conference planned for 2004 and the European Convention provisionally planned for the same year.

In its recent Communication, the Commission essentially focuses on three main questions:

1. How can the participation of citizens and all interested parties be effectively promoted?

2. How can it be ensured that transnational, transregional and intersectoral debates enrich one another?

3. How can national and specific sectoral debates be integrated with the European debate, and can they both flow into the forthcoming institutional reform?

[1] Project manager, responsible (jointly with Manfred Tessaring) in Cedefop for this project, which was started in late 1998 and will be finalised later in the year

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Education, vocational education and training, and lifelong learning are an important part of this debate. They are enormously important topics at all the levels addressed and so also at European level. This becomes clear if, inter alia, one reviews the EU Presidency's priorities for the second half of 2001:

The main priority is to intensify the debate on the future of Europe and its identity, especially in the light of the forthcoming EU enlargement and of the 'governance'-related aspects of the wider Europe. Of five other priorities listed, three directly concern issues closely associated with education and vocational training:

- improving the quality of work, promoting equal opportunities, combating exclusion and poverty;

- promoting lasting economic growth and a Community economic policy;

- promoting sustainable development and quality of life.

To go into detail, quantitative and qualitative employment indicators and also quality indicators are to be developed, with particular reference to the results of the evaluation of national action programmes for employment. The emphasis will be on the social dimension, and particular attention will be devoted to promoting the European social model: modernisation of social security systems, sustainable financing of pensions, etc.

Living standards and quality of life in the EU must be safeguarded and improved on an ongoing basis. A European sustainable development strategy, which is currently being drawn up and is due to be agreed at the European Council in Gothenburg in June, is aimed at ensuring that economic development (again) serves the interests of humanity to an increased extent. Here, three aspects are of equal importance: economic growth, social cohesion and environmental protection. In this context, precise objectives and specific indicators are to be established in the various areas.

At the special meeting in Lisbon, the heads of state and government agreed 'a new strategic goal ... in order to strengthen employment, economic reform and social cohesion ...', and agreed to do the utmost in

a) 'preparing the transition to a competitive, dynamic and knowledge-based economy

b) modernising the European social model by investing in people and building an active welfare state'[2].

For this purpose it was also agreed to establish 'a more coherent and systematic approach' to 'implementing a new open method of coordination' and to 'mobilising the necessary means'. However, as regards the last-mentioned the Council is referring primarily to the private sector and to public-private partnerships as well as to efforts by Member States themselves.

During its Lisbon meeting in March 2000 the European Council also asked the Education Council to submit a report about 'the concrete future objectives of education and training systems', which the Education Council has since done. The report defines three main objectives[3]:

- increasing the quality and effectiveness of education and training systems;
- facilitating the access of all to the education and training systems; and
- opening up education and training systems to the wider world.

The scenario project of Cedefop and the ETF may thus assist the Commission and the Council in their endeavours to define and further develop their strategies, indicators and benchmarks for measuring concrete objectives in a 10 year perspective and to identify more clearly the most suitable actors, actions and measures once the wider policy objectives for education and training policies (the preferred scenarios) have been agreed upon. The Commission report on the concrete objectives for education and training is an important step into that direction.

In addition it could effectively contribute to an indepth discussion about the level of intervention which is the most suitable in order to

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[2] See 'Presidency Conclusions, Lisbon European Council, 23 and 24 March 2000' and Presidency note on 'Employment, economic reforms and social cohesion, towards a Europe based on innovation and knowledge' (5256/00 + Addi COR 1 (en)).

[3] See: Report from the Education Council to the European Council 'The concrete future objectives of education and training systems' 5688/01 EDUC 20 and the report of the Commission with the same title (COM (2001) 59 final).

implement such actions and strategies in close cooperation with the relevant stakeholders, social partners and competent bodies, e.g. at local, regional, national, sectoral and/or European level.

2. The Cedefop/ETF Scenario Project

The *Scenarios and Strategies Project* was launched jointly with the ETF/Turin, on Cedefop's initiative, in late 1998, and the scientific and technical coordination was entrusted to the Max Goote Expert Centre at the University of Amsterdam. Five EU Member States and five Central and Eastern European countries participated. Its aim was to develop alternative scenarios and propose linked strategies for the future, which can serve as tools for policy discussions, planning and implementation[4].

It was launched at a time when the EU and the Member States had launched a wider debate about the future of education and training systems in the light of major challenges stemming from increasing competition in the world market, persistent high unemployment, especially among the lower-skilled and older workers, a lack of innovative capacity in relation to the new information and communication technologies, and the approaching service and knowledge economy.

From the outset, however, the scenario project it did not explicitly take account of wider political or socio-economic policy contexts, but concentrated on three fairly pragmatically selected contexts, focusing on challenges and trends in the development of education and training as well as lifelong learning (LLL) at the level of the participating countries and at comparative (European) level. Some 20 trends for

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[4] Cedefop: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, Thessaloniki, see: www.cedefop.eu.int and/or www.trainingvillage.gr, particularly under 'Scenarios and Strategies ...'; ETF: European Training Foundation/Turin, see: www.etf.eu.int, long version published by the Max Goote Kenniscentrum (for Vocational Training and Adult Education at the University of Amsterdam), cf. Sellin, Burkart, Fons van Wieringen, et al. (2000): *Scenarios and strategies for vocational education and training in Europe,* European synthesis report on phase I, Max Goote Rapport, Thessaloniki, Turin, Amsterdam, 197 pp.; a contribution exists in DE and EN from Sellin, B. (which has been submitted to the journal for publication) with the title: 'Scenarios and strategies for vocational education and Lifelong Learning in Europe, interim results and conclusions for policy and practice from the joint Cedefop/ETF research project' (working title), Thessaloniki 2001.

each of the three contexts agreed on (see below) were identified by the team and a questionnaire was jointly developed which was sent to stakeholders in each country and in order to ask them to rate and prioritise these trends.

The three contextual environments were: 'Economy and Technology', 'Employment and Labour Market', 'Training, Skills and Knowledge'. The questionnaire was sent to around 250 stakeholders and experts in each of the participating countries[5], who were invited to evaluate the probability and importance of these trends. The results of this enquiry were evaluated and discussed at both national and European level at a conference in Athens in January 2000. The second phase will be completed in autumn 2001 with a conference in Tallinn, Estonia.

The trends identified for these environments indicate the importance of partnerships and economic restructuring in order to improve competitiveness and to promote changes in the workplace and increasing flexibility of labour. This requires a corresponding flexibility of training programmes and a changing role for VET providers, as well as an increasing social role and individualisation of training, including LLL provision.

Of the numerous (and also diverging) strategies in relation to these trends, the following were seen as common and relevant to all the countries participating:

- in the *'economic and technological environment'*, they are strategies for improving the incentives for all actors to participate in training, to anticipate specific needs and to encourage learning organisations and knowledge management;

- in the *'employment and labour market context'*, modern workers and employment contracts are required, as well as support structures and measures for groups at risk;

- in the context of the *'environment for training, skills and knowledge acquisition'*, strategies are needed to improve the

[5] Participating countries: **Austria, Belgium/Luxembourg, Germany, Greece, United Kingdom (EU Member States) and Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia** (candidates for accession to the EU).

transparency of qualification structures and mobility, to foster personal development and to combat social exclusion, to provide basic skills, to concentrate on specific age groups and to persuade individuals to invest in their own training.

The second phase of this project should be completed by October this year, ending with a major conference in Tallinn (Estonia), and it is concentrating on two aspects: improving the structuring, consistency and robustness of both scenarios and strategies, and developing a tool and actions to stimulate discussion between stakeholders and utilisation of the scenarios and strategies at national and international level, with a view to further development of VET and LLL in the Member States and in Europe more generally. In Annex 1 the scenarios which were drawn up for the European level are summarised and a first proposal for an overarching scenario for all three environments is presented, which, however, will have to be further refined at the forthcoming conferences.

3. The value of the joint Cedefop/ETF project

In the same way as more strongly policy-oriented scenario studies, for example by the President of the Commission's 1999 Forward Studies Unit on the future of Europe (cf. Annex 2) and by the French Government's planning department in the run-up to the Nice European Council meeting of December 2000 on social Europe (cf. Annex 3), the Cedefop/ETF scenarios serve to offer guidance on education and VET issues, again over a ten-year period.

On the basis of them, the research and investigation carried out during this project can give the players in Member States, government representatives and the social partners, political decision-makers and practitioners with day-to-day responsibilities a selection of options enabling them to judge together what the future could or should look like and what choices the players themselves would have to make or what priorities they would have to set if they are persuaded by a particular scenario. Moreover, the Cedefop/ETF project can also offer indications as to which strategies will be important in the medium term and which players need to be involved in the decision in the short term. The method is an open one, enabling processes of joint deliberation and decision-making to be set in train, even and in particular in situations with a potential for conflict and for controversial judgements. Decisions to be taken in the short term can

be set in a medium- or long-term context, something which is extremely important, especially given the short-windedness and short-termism of the modes of action of the majority of the players responsible for policy today.

4. The future of VET and lifelong learning in Europe: its contribution to the further development of a European social model[6]

The results of the Cedefop/ETF project can provide fundamental support for the debate on the future objectives for the education and training systems' further development currently in progress. It may be extremely useful and contribute to the ongoing debate on **the future of VET and lifelong learning** within and among the many European institutions and agencies involved in this field and to extend this debate with the aim of including as many citizens as possible, and especially those engaged in education and VET(see the debate on the future of Europe initiated by the Nice Council in December 2000).

The forthcoming evaluation of Member States' comments on the LLL memorandum and the subsequent debate on the action plan for lifelong learning which the Commission will presumably be proposing in spring 2002 could be substantially supported by the outcomes of the scenario project. So too could the debate on demarcation of the competences of the various players and decision-making levels in the field of education, social affairs and employment, e.g. in connection with institutional reform of the (enlarged) EU in the run up to 2004.

The project results show that four topics and approaches are particularly prominent; they are equally important in all the countries concerned (both EU Member States and Central and Eastern European countries), and are easy to relate to the main emphases of EU policy (see the scenarios of the Forward Studies Unit, especially scenario 3, and the French planning department scenario C, which seem to be the most realistic ones summarised in Annexes 2 and 3 below.

1. The strengthening of the social (and environmental) dimension of VET and lifelong learning in comparison with the economic and competition-policy dimension: combating of polarisation and marginalisation, and assurance of equal opportunities in access to VET and LLL – the highest possible qualifications for all and/or

[6] See Conclusions of the Lisbon Council quoted above.

positive discrimination in favour of disadvantaged groups, regions and sectors[7].

2. Development of the institutions responsible for VET and lifelong learning, including cooperation between trade and industry/companies and state authorities, schools and enterprises, etc., promoting partnerships between public and private educational institutions and between education and VET and education within and outside schools, particularly at regional, sectoral and local level.

3. Development of a transparent structure of educational and VET qualifications and of adequate certification and accreditation systems at both national and European level, creating a connection between qualifications obtained in initial and continuing training, and facilitating a common reference framework for different education and (continuing) training paths and content. Promotion of European standards in the development of qualifications and in certification/accreditation in certain important sectors, and in ongoing cooperation in the promotion of innovations, tools and methods for adjusting VET and continuing training provision and qualifications.

4. (Re)organisation and modernisation of work, accompanied by improvements in the quality of work and life: improved integration of learning hours and working hours, facilitating time for education and recognition of experiential/informal learning, with increased involvement of the social partners, promotion of flexible wage agreements and forms of working (e.g. job rotation) appropriate to the differing requirements and living and working conditions of employees and the self-employed or liberal professions, and making it possible to combine work and learning throughout one's working life. This may include modernisation and decentralisation, individualisation and increased flexibility of options and supply structures, accompanied by a strengthening of the 'market' position of participants in VET and lifelong learning: combining improvements in the quality of work and quality of life, for instance through new types of collective agreements and working time/learning time combinations.

These 4 areas:

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[7] See the preamble to the Amsterdam Treaty, which refers to the promotion of the highest levels of competences of all the citizens of Europe.

1. the social (and environmental) dimension of VET and LLL;

2. public and private partnerships;

3. compatible national and European structures of educational and VET qualifications and stages, and promotion of European standards;

4. modernisation of work, accompanied by safeguarding and improvement of quality of life;

will presumably be the focus during the next 10 years. The crucial questions, however, relate to the necessary resources and funds and their distribution across the various levels of intervention and contributors: private households, companies and public bodies, national and/or European Union funds, collective funding arrangements or solidarity funds, insurance or voucher systems or individual responsibility.

The ten-year framework lends itself to the establishment of clear and precise objectives. Against the background of the scenarios developed, the strategies that need to be addressed at the various levels have yet to be further refined and weighted. However, the bodies responsible for implementing these actions, measures and strategies also have yet to be determined, and the necessary tools, instruments and methods have yet to be chosen – here, systemic and institutional reforms are extremely important.

To this end, further and more intensive use could be made of the scenario-development and future-workshops tool, with a view to bringing together the players, politicians, social partners and practitioners already involved or to be involved, and to preparing and taking, on a consensual, lasting and proactive basis, decisions on, for example, restructuring of funding, and the selection of indicators and benchmarks for prosecution of employment strategy, inter alia. Conflicting starting positions are not necessarily an obstacle and may even be needed for drawing up agreements on strategy development in the field of education, VET and LLL.

Meanwhile, however, the positions of trade and industry and the trade unions have never been so close to one another as they are now. State and political bodies, as well as practitioners, should take advantage of

this broad consensus to facilitate urgently needed solutions to problems, which could otherwise worsen to the point of crisis.

Annexes:

1 Scenarios of the joint Cedefop/ETF project

2 Scenarios of the EC Commission's Forward Studies Unit

3 Scenarios of the French planning department

Annex 1 : Scenarios of the joint Cedefop/ETF Project within the three contextual environments drawn up

Matrix 1: Scenarios in Context A, 'Economy and Technology'

Partnership between public and private agencies // Economic restructuring to increase competitiveness	*No/few partnerships/cooperation*	*Many partnerships between public and private agencies (for economic and technological development)*
Little modernisation	**1 Stagnation** Economic development is uncertain, little interaction with initial and continuing training	**2 Good will but few results** In this scenario no strong economic impetus prevails, although numerous links with training providers exist
Comprehensive modernisation	**3 Short-term development** Modernisation and restructuring of enterprises takes place without significant links to education	**4 Comprehensive development** The economy is thoroughly modernised and there is a high level of interaction between education/training and enterprises

The following dimensions and scenarios were found for the Employment and Labour Market environment:

Matrix 2: Four Scenarios in Context B, 'Employment and Labour Market'

Modernisation/Flexibility of labour, the workplace and organisation of work // Workforce mobility (occupational and geographic)	***Little modernisation or flexibility of labour***	***High degree of flexibility and restructuring of labour***
Little mobility or flexibility	**1 Immobility** Enterprises cling to traditional structures, and staff are not interested in change or innovation	**2 Organisational change** The organisation of labour changes while the workforce clings to old practices
High degree of mobility/flexibility among workforce	**3 Flexible workers, inflexible organisation of labour** In this case employees are prepared to think in terms of new dimensions and forms of labour, but enterprises show little innovation in their internal organisation.	**4 Synergy between Labour and Capital** Here there is agreement on the need for restructuring labour and its organisation and the need for the workforce to adapt: both pull together.

Two separate matrices were needed for the Training, Skills and Knowledge environment because the four most important dimensions were considered almost equally important.

Matrix 3a: Four Scenarios in Context C, 'Training, Skills and Knowledge (I)'

Development of the demand for social and general qualifications and competences // innovative and adaptable external and group training providers	***Little demand for social and general competences in connection with in-company training***	***Strong demand and involvement of enterprises***
Little willingness to adapt/innovate on the part of training providers	**1 Traditional inward-looking system** No great need for social and generic qualifications; providers retain their usual courses and content	**2 Clash between supply and demand** The demand for social and generic competences is great but is not being satisfied
(Vocational) education centres well prepared	**3 Unproductive innovation** Education providers renew their programmes but there is no commensurate demand	**4 Demand keeps pace with the innovative capacity of education provision** Decentralisation of the supply structure and growing demand for new kinds of qualification are commensurate

The second comparison in the education and qualification environment is as follows:

Matrix 3b: Four Scenarios in Context C, 'Training, Skills and Knowledge (II)'

Social cushioning of certain target groups //individual responsibility	***Vocational training policies not viewed as social policies***	***Vocational training is used extensively for the integration or reintegration of vulnerable target groups***
Little individual responsibility for vocational training	**1 Fragmentation** Hardly anyone feels really responsible for vocational training	**2 Predominantly collective responsibility** Traditional state-based 'social democratic' training predominates
Vocational training is primarily the responsibility of the individual	**3 Neo-liberal approach** The market and the purchasing power of the individual or the economy dominate	**4 Responsibility lies jointly with the individual and public or social partners** Vocational training provision as a public responsibility and individual initiative coincide

For further details and analyses, including country-specific factors, please refer to the individual reports and findings in the respective window of the Cedefop website www.trainingvillage.gr

It was especially interesting to discover in the course of the first phase of the project that:

- the assessment of the importance of the basic trends and the likelihood of their occurrence did not differ significantly in the participating countries, in spite of the numerous differences in details. After joint discussion each country could add up to three specific trends to the approved list of about 20 per context. Only a few teams took advantage of this option;

- as expected, several significant differences existed between the EU countries and accession countries participating, but these were not so marked that the two groups needed to be treated separately. In other words, the Central and Eastern European countries differ as much among themselves as they do from the EU countries, and the latter also demonstrated diverse structures. These differences are less noticeable in the fairly general environments of contexts A and B than in context C; and the scenarios naturally differ less than the strategies, measures, planned actions and players.

It would therefore be overly simplistic to generalise that these countries were clinging to the 'ancién régime' (the old system) or, at the other extreme, that they were throwing the baby out with the bath water and there was a clear trend towards neo-liberal development or a return to the Manchester capitalism of the century before last. The pressure for action and reform in the Central and Eastern European countries is, however, naturally much greater than in the EU countries, which do not have to implement this comprehensive systemic transformation.

As to mobility, freedom of movement, European standards and qualification trends, it was noticeable that:

- the Central and Eastern European countries do not wish to see their newly acquired freedom of movement jeopardised, but they do fear that the emigration of highly-qualified skilled workers in particular will continue, delaying the necessary modernisation of their own economy. Many worry about a brain-drain to the West.

- the Central and Eastern European countries' perception of the EU has become much more critical and sober, but their willingness to think in terms of European (i.e. EU) standards and qualification structures seems to be greater than in the participating EU Member States themselves.

Within phase II it was decided to try to establish one set of overarching scenarios for all three contexts and to further develop scenarios and strategies on the individual (Member) State level. An overarching scenario matrix, which may be the outcome and proposed in the following of the current final consultation process may be for instance:

Overarching scenario matrix covering all three contexts (at European level)[8]

Socio-economic development vs. systemic divergence or convergence	***Competition rather than cooperation***	***Socio-economic cohesion***
Liberalisation, decentralisation and individualisation	**1. Splendid isolation** Growing polarisation and marginalisation of disadvantaged target groups; major systemic divergences within and between countries; the education/training systems and providers are competing excessively	**2. Unity in diversity** Social role of education and training is recognised; however, no wider and richer system development is taking place; systems develop only slowly towards a mutual transparency or compatibility
Increasing convergence und mutual learning	**3. Increasing convergence** Despite prevailing divergences in the economy and society, converging rules and provision are being set and/or further developed, but links to industry and private economic are largely missing. Efforts to ensure compatible rules and procedures at European level are contributing only little to increasing mobility and innovation. Systems and structures are rather competing and do not really care about European matters.	**4. Balance and coherence** The trend towards a closer socio-economic cooperation is being confirmed by a pro-active cooperation among European Member States (as well as pre-accession states) in education and training. More people (young and old) are getting an ever higher level of education and training. The necessary resources are made available by both public and private funds.

[8] This scenario matrix and alternative proposals coming up on the basis of the more systematic synthesis report on phase 2 will be forwarded to the the final European level Cedefop/ETF conference in October 2001 in Tallinn/Estonia.

Annex 2

Scenarios of the European Commission's Forward studies unit from 1999 on overall European policy development[9]

On the basis of five major topics chosen as the starting point of their work[10]:

development of institutions and *governance;*
social cohesion;
economic adaptability;
enlargement of the EU; and
the international context

this group bundled a number of variables relating to potential scenarios, allocated them to various players and then interviewed high-ranking decision-makers from the Commission and other EU institutions, brought them together in workshops and worked out alternatives with them. Finally they arrived at five scenarios, which they termed 'coherent, concerted and plausible images', representing the spectrum of possibilities, factors and players which could in future play a crucial role. Each of these scenarios has a final, corresponding image, which I summarise briefly here[11]:

- Scenario 1, 'The Triumph of the Market', is characterised, as its name implies, by the absolute dominance of economic liberalism and the free exchange of goods and services. Europe, whatever its standard, would hardly be different from the rest of the world, which would then be a single planetary market.

- Scenario 2, 'A Hundred Flowers', is typified by growing paralysis (and corruption) of major public and private institutions. Europeans withdraw to the local and micro level and to a primarily informal economy entailing a duplication of initiatives with no logical connection.

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[9] This group, attached to the office of the President of the Commission, was set up by the former Commission President Jacques Delors, see: Bertrand, G. et al 1999: *Europe 2010* ... op.cit.

[10] ibid. p. 11.

[11] Cedefop translation from the French, Bertrand, G. et al, ibid. p. 5, 6.

- Scenario 3, 'Divided Responsibilities', is based on the hypothesis of metamorphosis of the public sector against a background of positive economic development, which could engender renewed social and industrial policies.

- Scenario 4, 'The Developing Society', depicts a society undergoing extensive transformation in respect of socio-economic and political developments under the premise that this time ecological and human development values prevail. It includes a basically workable new form of humanism and paves the way for an 'immaterial and global renaissance'.

- Scenario 5, 'The Turbulent Neighbourhood', depicts a weakened Europe in conjunction with sudden and deeply disturbed geopolitical developments, both in the East and in the South, with growing tensions and conflicts causing a 'European Security Council' to be entirely concerned with questions of defence and security.

These scenarios reveal one thing at least: they show that the search for a vision for Europe, its institutions, its identity and geopolitical stabilisation is still in full swing. The process of enlargement is not yet complete, and the broad-based consensus to find the socio-economic direction which Europe could take in the next 10 years is still relatively open. The further stabilisation of Europe with a maximum guarantee of economic and social prosperity can, at present, be regarded as a doubtful hypothesis.

Annex 3

Scenarios of the French planning department on a "Social Europe"

"Employment, collective agreements, social protection: what kind of

Social Europe?"[12]

An expert working group[13] formed under the leadership of the Research and Education Centre for Socio-economic Analyses at the Technical College of Road and Bridge Construction[14], comprising civil servants, consultants, researchers and, not least, speakers for the employers' organisations and the trade unions, to discuss social and socio-political scenarios in preparation for the French presidency in the second half of 2000:

For some time now, the economic and monetary policies of Europe have been developing without reference to a 'Social Europe'.

The work of the 'Atélier'[15] focused on the following questions:

1. How can social solidarity be achieved in this new environment *(the Economic and Monetary Union, ed.)*?
2. Which new models for industrial relations[16] will appear?
3. What will be the future role of the markets in the individual Member States and in the EU?
4. What part will the social partners play on a national and perhaps European scale?

Below we present the resulting four different development scenarios for a Social Europe which were established on the basis of three central questions:

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[12] Commissariat Général du Plan, La Documentation Française, Paris, November 1999: Emploi, négociations collectives, protection sociale: vers quelle Europe sociale? Rapport du Groupe présidé par Joel Maurice, 215 pp.; see also www.plan.gouv.fr/publications/maurice.

[13] Set up by the 'Commissariat général du plan' in connection with preliminary considerations on reforming the European institutions prior to the intergovernmental conference in Nice, which took place as planned in autumn 2000. Since this brought no significant progress in these central questions on the future identity and development of Europe, a new intergovernmental conference was set for 2004.

[14] This is one of the 'Grandes Ecoles', France's elite schools which educate not only 'technical elites' but also management personnel for other sectors, especially the French administration and public enterprises.

[15] Can be translated as workshop discussion.

[16] The original speaks of 'rélations professionnelles', i.e. occupational relations, Communiqué 'Emploi, négociations collectives ...' in www.plan.gouv.fr/presse/cp 15.12.99.html.

- Will the national social systems continue to develop in isolation?

- Will the systems of industrial (occupational) relations converge?

- Will the social security systems be complemented in future by specific European benefits?

The current situation whereby differing national models are preserved and accumulated has engendered friction, contradictions and tension. The process accompanying the construction of Europe may indeed have brought about a degree of approximation of the social systems during its different phases, but by and large this approximation has been limited.

Discussions between representatives of the European Social Partners (European Trade Union Confederation and European employers' associations), which started in Val Duchesse near Brussels in the early 1980s, have led to the Social Dialogue and gradually to the 1989 Charter of Basic Social Rights, the 1991 agreement between the Social Partners and joint statements, and to the 1993 appendix to the Maastricht Treaty in the form of a protocol declared binding by 11 of the 12 states making up the Union at the time.

Finally, in 1997 the Treaty of Amsterdam made a breakthrough with important progress in social affairs: annually updated guidelines on employment policies, and anchoring of basic social rights[17] in the Treaty with reference to the respective Council of Europe Conventions.

So what do the four scenarios presented by the working group have to offer?

In the context of the two key issues, 'industrial and occupational relations' and 'social solidarity/security', and the added dimensions of

a) continued divergence, or

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[17] However, in contrast to political rights such as freedom of speech, membership of trade unions, etc. these are not legally enforceable even now (see too the catalogue of basic rights agreed in Nice. Its scope still has to be decided: is it valid only for the European institutions, or does it apply to the Member States and all citizens?). This is likely to be a prominent topic at the next intergovernmental conference, alongside the division of responsibility among the various levels (Member States, regions, EU institutions).

b) increasing convergence of the former, or
c) prevalence of national authority, or
d) the added dimension of the European level for the second issue,

the workshop discussions with high-ranking researchers, civil servants and decision-makers resulted in the following matrix.

OVERVIEW: Scenarios of the French government's planning department, 1999[18]

Type of industrial or occupational relations // social solidarity or cohesion [19]	***Various models drawn up (status quo)***	***Convergence in the sense of harmonisation (increasing approximation)***
remains essentially different in each country (status quò)	**Scenario A**: Fragmented Social Europe	**Scenario B:** Competing Social Europe
develops an additional common dimension (stronger social cohesion)	**Scenario C:** a Europe united despite its differences	**Scenario D:** Integrated Social Europe

For further details on the scenario please refer to the source given.

This is neither the time nor the place to say which scenario Cedefop favours. The French working group has, however, expressed an opinion: it prefers the *Model of a Europe united despite its differences*, which should be preserved and exploited as its heritage.

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18 Communiqué ... op cit.

19 The comments in brackets are the author's but are based on explanations in the publication quoted.